

REMARKS

35 U.S.C. 103 Rejections

The Office Action rejects claims 1-31 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over US Publication 2003/0074264 (Hoffman), and further in view of US Publication 2004/0030640 (Mahnken).

Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite a method of marketing products and services through an independent dealer comprising providing information on a central database related to an inventory of products and services available through a moving and storage company. The products include a plurality of trucks, rental equipment and storage units made available by the moving and storage company. The services include house cleaning, moving help, and insurance. The information related to the inventory of products and services includes descriptions and pictures of the products and services. The method includes providing access through a website for an independent dealer to review the information related to the inventory of products and services. The website provides an interface for the independent dealer to rent, lease, and sell a product or a service stored on the central database. The method includes receiving a rental equipment request from a customer. The rental equipment request includes a pick-up location, pick-up time, drop-off location, drop-off time, insurance information and type of rental. The type of rental consists of a one-way or roundtrip rental. The rental equipment request is entered via the website. The method includes selecting rental equipment from the inventory of products and services according to the rental equipment request. The rental equipment includes a truck, trailer, or tow-dolly.

The method includes selecting a storage unit from the inventory of products and services according to customer selection criteria. The customer selection criteria includes a size, maximum distance from a preferred location, move-in date, move-out date, and climate control preference. The method includes completing a transaction for leasing the storage unit and the rental equipment through the independent dealer interacting with the central database via the website. The independent dealer and the moving and storage company each receive portions of a payment made by the customer as part of the transaction for leasing the storage unit and the rental equipment.

The Hoffman and Mahnken references, taken singularly or in combination, do not teach or suggest providing information on a central database related to an inventory of products and services available through a moving and storage company. The products include a plurality of trucks, rental equipment and storage units made available by the moving and storage company. The services include house cleaning, moving help, and insurance. In the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that the storage units of the present claim are disclosed by element 4520 of the Hoffman reference as shown in FIG. 45. FIG. 45, however, only illustrates an example computer workstation for implementing the system described by the Hoffman reference. In FIG. 45, element 4520 refers to a conventional "disk storage unit" coupled to the computer system for storing data generated by the system. Paragraph 0414. In contrast, the storage unit of the present claim may refer to a self-storage unit or locker used to store furniture and other items. Because the disk storage unit of the Hoffman reference refers to a computer hard drive for storing digital data and in no way describes the storage unit of the

present claim, Applicants respectfully maintain that the Hoffman and Mahnken references fail to disclose essential limitations of the present claim.

The Hoffman and Mahnken references, taken singularly or in combination, do not teach or suggest providing access through a website for an independent dealer to review the information related to the inventory of products and services. The website provides an interface for the independent dealer to rent, lease, and sell a product or a service stored on the central database.

The Hoffman and Mahnken references, taken singularly or in combination, do not teach or suggest selecting a storage unit from the inventory of products and services according to customer selection criteria. The customer selection criteria includes a size, maximum distance from a preferred location, move-in date, move-out date, and climate control preference.

Finally, in making the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to combine the Hoffman and Mahnken references. The Examiner provides no basis for this assertion and fails to provide any rationale for finding that the references discuss analogous arts or that they may be relied upon for the purposes of a § 103(a) rejection. M.P.E.P. § 2141. The first reference, Hoffman, discusses a system for supply chain management. The Hoffman system seeks to provide supply chain participants with the appropriate volume of goods to sell. See Abstract and Summary of the Invention. The second reference, Mahnken, however, describes an online property leasing system. The Mahnken system allows a user to browse currently vacant units and performs pre-lease screening of potential consumers. See Abstract. Although the references both use computers and computer networks, they describe different systems

for solving different problems in different ways. The Hoffman reference is primarily concerned with supply chain management. The reference never discusses leasing or renting equipment or storage units. Conversely, the Mahnken reference provides a more efficient way for an individual to rent a house and has nothing to do with supply chain management. Accordingly, the references describe unrelated systems and solve unrelated problems. Because the Examiner has failed to provide a sufficient basis for combining the references, Applicants maintain that the Examiner improperly rejected claim 1 by combining the Hoffman and Mahnken references.

Therefore, claim 1 is believed to patentably distinguish over the prior art references of record, taken singularly or in combination. Claims 2-3 and 5-9 are believed to be in condition for allowance as each is dependent from an allowable base claim.

Applicants have amended claim 10 to recite a method of leasing products and services comprising providing information on a central database related to an inventory of products and services. The products include a plurality of trucks, rental equipment, and storage units. The services include house cleaning, moving help, and insurance. The information related to the inventory of products and services includes descriptions and pictures of the products and services. The method includes providing access through a website for an independent dealer to review the information related to the inventory of products and services. The website provides an interface for the independent dealer to rent, lease, or sell a product or a service stored on the central database. The method includes receiving customer selection criteria from a customer. The customer selection criteria includes a size, maximum distance from a preferred

location, move-in date, move-out date, and climate control preference. The customer selection criteria is entered via the website. The method includes selecting a storage unit from the inventory of products and services according to the customer selection criteria, and completing a transaction for leasing the storage unit through the independent dealer interacting with the central database via the website.

The Hoffman and Mahnken references, taken singularly or in combination, do not teach or suggest providing information on a central database related to an inventory of products and services. The products include a plurality of trucks, rental equipment, and storage units. The services include house cleaning, moving help, and insurance. In the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that the storage units of the present claim are disclosed by element 4520 of the Hoffman reference as shown in FIG. 45. FIG. 45, however, only illustrates an example computer workstation for implementing the system described by the Hoffman reference. In FIG. 45, element 4520 refers to a conventional "disk storage unit" coupled to the computer system for storing data generated by the system. Paragraph 0414. In contrast, the storage unit of the present claim may refer to a self-storage unit or locker used to store furniture and other items. Because the disk storage unit of the Hoffman reference refers to a computer hard drive for storing digital data and in no way describes the storage unit of the present claim, Applicants respectfully maintain that the Hoffman and Mahnken references fail to disclose essential limitations of the present claim.

The Hoffman and Mahnken references, taken singularly or in combination, do not teach or suggest providing access through a website for an independent dealer to review the information

related to the inventory of products and services. The website provides an interface for the independent dealer to rent, lease, or sell a product or a service stored on the central database.

The Hoffman and Mahnken references, taken singularly or in combination, do not teach or suggest receiving customer selection criteria from a customer. The customer selection criteria includes a size, maximum distance from a preferred location, move-in date, move-out date, and climate control preference.

Finally, in making the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to combine the Hoffman and Mahnken references. The Examiner provides no basis for this assertion and fails to provide any rationale for finding that the references discuss analogous arts or that they may be relied upon for the purposes of a § 103(a) rejection. M.P.E.P. § 2141. The first reference, Hoffman, discusses a system for supply chain management. The Hoffman system seeks to provide supply chain participants with the appropriate volume of goods to sell. See Abstract and Summary of the Invention. The second reference, Mahnken, however, describes an online property leasing system. The Mahnken system allows a user to browse currently vacant units and performs pre-lease screening of potential consumers. See Abstract. Although the references both use computers and computer networks, they describe different systems for solving different problems in different ways. The Hoffman reference is primarily concerned with supply chain management. The reference never discusses leasing or renting equipment or storage units. Conversely, the Mahnken reference provides a more efficient way for an individual to rent a house and has nothing to do with supply chain management. Accordingly, the references

describe unrelated systems and solve unrelated problems. Because the Examiner has failed to provide a sufficient basis for combining the references, Applicants maintain that the Examiner improperly rejected claim 10 by combining the Hoffman and Mahnken references.

Therefore, claim 10 is believed to patentably distinguish over the prior art references of record, taken singularly or in combination. Claims 14-19 are believed to be in condition for allowance as each is dependent from an allowable base claim.

Applicants have amended claim 20 to recite a method of marketing products and services through a third party agent comprising providing information on a central database related to an inventory of products and services. The products include a plurality of trucks, rental equipment, and storage units. The information related to the inventory of products and services includes descriptions and pictures of the products and services. The method includes providing access through a website for a third party agent to review the information related to the inventory of products and services, receiving customer selection criteria from a customer via the website, making a selection from the inventory of products and services in accordance with the customer selection criteria, and recording a transaction for the selected inventory through the third party agent interacting with the central database via the website.

The Hoffman and Mahnken references, taken singularly or in combination, do not teach or suggest providing information on a central database related to an inventory of products and services. The products include a plurality of trucks, rental equipment, and storage units. In the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that the storage units of the present claim are disclosed

by element 4520 of the Hoffman reference as shown in FIG. 45. FIG. 45, however, only illustrates an example computer workstation for implementing the system described by the Hoffman reference. In FIG. 45, element 4520 refers to a conventional "disk storage unit" coupled to the computer system for storing data generated by the system. Paragraph 0414. In contrast, the storage unit of the present claim may refer to a self-storage unit or locker used to store furniture and other items. Because the disk storage unit of the Hoffman reference refers to a computer hard drive for storing digital data and in no way describes the storage unit of the present claim, Applicants respectfully maintain that the Hoffman and Mahnken references fail to disclose essential limitations of the present claim.

In making the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to combine the Hoffman and Mahnken references. The Examiner provides no basis for this assertion and fails to provide any rationale for finding that the references discuss analogous arts or that they may be relied upon for the purposes of a § 103(a) rejection. M.P.E.P. § 2141. The first reference, Hoffman, discusses a system for supply chain management. The Hoffman system seeks to provide supply chain participants with the appropriate volume of goods to sell. See Abstract and Summary of the Invention. The second reference, Mahnken, however, describes an online property leasing system. The Mahnken system allows a user to browse currently vacant units and performs pre-lease screening of potential consumers. See Abstract. Although the references both use computers and computer networks, they describe different systems for solving different problems in different ways. The Hoffman reference is primarily concerned with supply chain management. The reference

never discusses leasing or renting equipment or storage units. Conversely, the Mahnken reference provides a more efficient way for an individual to rent a house and has nothing to do with supply chain management. Accordingly, the references describe unrelated systems and solve unrelated problems. Because the Examiner has failed to provide a sufficient basis for combining the references, Applicants maintain that the Examiner improperly rejected claim 20 by combining the Hoffman and Mahnken references.

Therefore, claim 20 is believed to patentably distinguish over the prior art references of record, taken singularly or in combination. Claims 21-26 are believed to be in condition for allowance as each is dependent from an allowable base claim.

Applicants have amended claim 27 to recite a system of leasing products and services comprising means for providing information on a central database related to an inventory of products and services. The products include a plurality of trucks, rental equipment, and storage units. The services include house cleaning, moving help, and insurance. The information related to the inventory of products and services includes descriptions and pictures of the products and services. The system includes means for providing access through a website for an independent dealer to review the information related to the inventory of products and services. The website provides an interface for the independent dealer to rent, lease, or sell a product or a service stored on the central database. The system includes means for receiving customer selection criteria from a customer via the website, means for selecting from the inventory of products and services according to the customer selection criteria, and means for completing a transaction for leasing

selected inventory through the independent dealer interacting with the central database via the website.

The Hoffman and Mahnken references, taken singularly or in combination, do not teach or suggest means for providing information on a central database related to an inventory of products and services. The products include a plurality of trucks, rental equipment, and storage units. In the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that the storage units of the present claim are disclosed by element 4520 of the Hoffman reference as shown in FIG. 45. FIG. 45, however, only illustrates an example computer workstation for implementing the system described by the Hoffman reference. In FIG. 45, element 4520 refers to a conventional "disk storage unit" coupled to the computer system for storing data generated by the system. Paragraph 0414. In contrast, the storage unit of the present claim may refer to a self-storage unit or locker used to store furniture and other items. Because the disk storage unit of the Hoffman reference refers to a computer hard drive for storing digital data and in no way describes the storage unit of the present claim, Applicants respectfully maintain that the Hoffman and Mahnken references fail to disclose essential limitations of the present claim.

The Hoffman and Mahnken references, taken singularly or in combination, do not teach or suggest means for providing access through a website for an independent dealer to review the information related to the inventory of products and services. The website provides an interface for the independent dealer to rent, lease, or sell a product or a service stored on the central database.

Finally, in making the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a),

the Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to combine the Hoffman and Mahnken references. The Examiner provides no basis for this assertion and fails to provide any rationale for finding that the references discuss analogous arts or that they may be relied upon for the purposes of a § 103(a) rejection. M.P.E.P. § 2141. The first reference, Hoffman, discusses a system for supply chain management. The Hoffman system seeks to provide supply chain participants with the appropriate volume of goods to sell. See Abstract and Summary of the Invention. The second reference, Mahnken, however, describes an online property leasing system. The Mahnken system allows a user to browse currently vacant units and performs pre-lease screening of potential consumers. See Abstract. Although the references both use computers and computer networks, they describe different systems for solving different problems in different ways. The Hoffman reference is primarily concerned with supply chain management. The reference never discusses leasing or renting equipment or storage units. Conversely, the Mahnken reference provides a more efficient way for an individual to rent a house and has nothing to do with supply chain management. Accordingly, the references describe unrelated systems and solve unrelated problems. Because the Examiner has failed to provide a sufficient basis for combining the references, Applicants maintain that the Examiner improperly rejected claim 27 by combining the Hoffman and Mahnken references.

Therefore, claim 27 is believed to patentably distinguish over the prior art references of record, taken singularly or in combination. Claims 28-31 are believed to be in condition for allowance as each is dependent from an allowable base claim.

USPTO Serial Number: 10/718,111
Applicant: Venkataraman Srinivasan et al.
RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION MAILED MAY 2, 2008

Conclusion

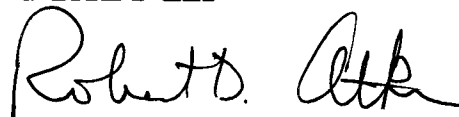
Applicants believe that all information and requirements for the application have been provided to the USPTO. If there are matters that can be discussed by telephone to further the prosecution of the Application, Applicants invite the Examiner to call the undersigned attorney at the Examiner's convenience.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees due with this Response to U.S. PTO Account No. **17-0055**.

Respectfully submitted,
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